

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 OPR-02 SCA-01 PER-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /065 W

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R 050931Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2769

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

CINCPACREPPHIL

13AF CLARK AB PI

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, OTRA, RP

SUBJECT: TRAVEL BY FOREIGNERS IN MINDANAO

1. MANILA PRESS ANNOUNCED MARCH 4 THAT DEFENSE DEPARTMENT (DND) HAD ANNOUNCED "BAN" ON ENTRY OF FOREIGNERS TO "CRITICAL AREAS" OF MINDANAO, SULU AND PALAWAN WHERE CONFLICT CONTINUES BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND MUSLIM REBEL GROUPS. BAN WAS REPORTEDLY ORDERED BY DEF. SEC. ENRILE AND C OF S ESPINO BECAUSE OF RECURRING AMBUSCADES, KIDNAPPINGS AND OTHER TERRORIST ACTS. PRESS VERSIONS (INCLUDING GOP NEWS AGENCY PNA) DID NOT DEFINE AREAS CONCERNED BEYOND STATING THAT THEY WERE ESSENTIALLY THOSE COVERED BY OPERATIONS OF SOUTHWEST COMMAND (SOWESCOM) AND CENTRAL MINDANAO COMMAND (CEMCOM) (IN OTHER WORDS, APPROXIMATELY REGIONS IX AND XII, OR THE SULU, ZAMBOANGA, COTABATO AND LANA O PROVINCES.)

2. PRESS STATED THAT PERMANENT RESIDENTS AND "THOSE

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DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN GOVERNMENTAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS" WOULD BE EXEMPT FROM BAN. ALL OTHER FOREIGNERS WOULD

NEED "WRITTEN AUTHORIZATION OF DEFENSE CHIEF" TO ENTER.

3. DAO CONTACTED DND IN EFFORT TO CLARIFY DETAILS OF "BAN" WITH THE FOLLOWING RESULTS:

A. DND INITIALLY STATED THAT "BAN" BEING HANDLED BY PUBLIC INFORMATION SERVICE (PIS) WHICH WOULD INDICATE IT IS AIMED PRIMARILY AT PRESS:

B. IN SUBSEQUENT CONVERSATION COL. BANEZ (DEPUTY FO AFP INTELLIGENCE CHIEF GEN. PAZ) TOLD DAO "BAN" WOULD INCLUDE FOLLOWING PROVINCES: ALL OF LANA O SUR AND NORTE, MAGUINDANAO, AND SULTAN KUDARAT EXCEPT ECERTAIN MUNICIPALITIES; ALL NORTH COTABATO; FOUR MINICIPALITIES (ONLY) IN SOUTH COTABATO; ALL SULU, BASILIA, TAWI TAWI, ZAMBOANGA DEL NORTE AND SUR (BUT NOT ZAMBOANGA CITY); CERTAIN AREAS IN DAVAO NORTE, ORINTAL AND SUR, AND PALAWAN "SOUTH OF THE SECOND NECK" (I.E., THE AREA ROUGHTLY SOUTH OF BROOKES POINT.)

C. BANEZ SAID EXCEPTIONS TO "BAN" WOULD HAVE TO BE MADE BY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, UPON ENDORSEMENT BY PAZ' OFFICE (IN CASE OF MIL ATTACHES), BY DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS - DFA (IN CASE OF DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR PERSONNEL) AND -- HE THOUGHT -- BY COUNTERPART AGENCIES IN CASE OF AID PERSONNEL.

COMMENT: IT IS CLEAR THAT GOP HAS NOT YET THOUGHT THROUGH MODALITIES OF "BAN" AND IT ANYTHING BUT CLEAR THAT RATHER SWEEPING MEASURE INTIMATED BY BANEZ WILL BE IMPLEMENTED. DEFINITION OF AREAS AFFECTED IS STILL VAGUE. WE WILL BE ATTEMPTING TO CLARIFY FURTHER ASAP. IN THE MEANTIME, PENDING MORE EXPLICIT ANNOUNCEMENT OF POLICY BY GOP, EMBASSY WILL CONTINUE TO AUTHORIZE PERSONNEL TO TRAVEL UNDER EXISTING GUIDELINES (WHICH INCLUDE AVOIDANCE OF CRITICAL AREAS.) SULLIVAN

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